



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
PHONE (302) 577-8949
CELL (302) 893-8939
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

Media Release

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Attorney General's Office Helps Landlords Combat Neighborhood Crime *Second training for property owners to be held Saturday, August 20th*

Wilmington – For the second time this year, the Department of Justice will hold a day-long training course for property owners to give them the information they need to combat criminal activity on their properties and avoid legal sanctions under the state's Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act, Attorney General Beau Biden announced today. **The training will take place on Saturday, August 20th, in Wilmington at the Carvel State Office Building, 3rd Floor, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.**

"Property owners have a powerful role to play in the fight against neighborhood crime, even if they do not live in the neighborhood," said Attorney General Biden. "We want landlords to have the tools they need to be good neighbors and not allow crime to take place on their properties, but we also want them to know that we won't hesitate to take legal action if they fail to do so."

With a high concentration of both rental properties and violent crime, the training is focused on the City of Wilmington but is open to anyone who wishes to attend. It is designed to provide landlords with information they need to act responsibly about criminal activity taking place on their property. Under the Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act, property owners are held accountable for such activity and must either abate it voluntarily or face the Attorney General's Office in court. The training course features speakers from the Attorney General's Office, the City of Wilmington, the Wilmington Police Department, Community Legal Aid Society, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and members of the Delaware Judiciary, and covers various topics, including identifying gang and drug activity, criminal background screening, eviction proceedings, Fair Housing laws, City and State Nuisance property laws, and crime prevention through environmental design.

Landlords, tenants, and members of the community who have questions about Saturday's landlord training, or want to report a property to the Attorney General's Office are encouraged to call the Nuisance Abatement Program at (302) 577-8345.

The Attorney General's Nuisance Abatement program uses the state's Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act to identify and investigate properties where drug and vice crime is permitted to flourish. To date, over 140 properties have been rehabilitated and nearly 400 properties remain on the Program's "watch list." Additionally, 16 properties have been shut down because they

were found to present an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of the surrounding community.

Earlier this month, enhancements to the Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act were signed into law after legislation spearheaded by the Attorney General's Office was passed by the General Assembly. The changes to the law include expanding the criteria used to declare a property a nuisance, allowing the Court to consider additional factors such as residents' fear and increased calls to police, and increasing the civil penalties for owners of nuisance properties to more accurately reflect the damage the criminal activity does to the community.

The Nuisance Abatement Program is a key component of the recently announced plan to target high crime areas across the State, starting with the City of Wilmington. The Attorney General's Office created a specialized Wilmington Unit of eight prosecutors dedicated full-time to prosecuting crimes committed in the City. One of those prosecutors will focus solely on shutting down nuisance properties.

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